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Minnesota killing sparks mass anger against ICE in US

• Woman in SUV shot at point-blank range by an agent • Outrage intensifies after Trump calls act 'self-defence'; official accuses victim of 'domestic terrorism' • Officers use tear gas, make arrests during demonstrations

MINNEAPOLIS: Protesters clashed with federal law enforcement officers in Minneapolis on Thursday, a day after an immigration agent shot and killed a woman in Minnesota, sparking outrage that was intensified by Trump administration officials labelling the incident an act of "domestic terrorism".

Federal officers using pepperball guns and tear gas scuffled with a large crowd of demonstrators beside a government facility in Fort Snelling, just outside Minneapolis.

Protesters chanted slogans criticising the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency as officers pushed against the crowd, detaining several people, including one who struck an agent with a cardboard sign.

The protest followed the fatal shooting of Renee Nicole Good, 37, on Wednesday. According to witness accounts and video footage, Good was shot at point-blank range as she apparently tried to drive away from agents who were crowding around her car, which they said was blocking their way.

Footage of the incident shows one masked ICE agent attempting to open the woman's car door before another agent fired three times into the Honda SUV. The vehicle then hurtled out of control and smashed into stationary vehicles. Her bloodied body could be seen slumped inside the crashed SUV.

The shooting drew swift and conflicting reactions from top officials. President Donald Trump claimed the agents acted in self-defence.

"I want to see nobody get shot. I want to see nobody screaming and trying to run over policemen either," Trump said in an interview with *The New York Times.*

Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem spoke in favour of ICE agent calling the incident "domestic terrorism". In contrast, Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey called that assertion "bullshit."

Minneapolis Police Chief Brian O'Hara told *CNN* that Good was not the target of any immigration enforcement action and was only suspected of blocking traffic. On social media, Vice President JD Vance described the victim as "a deranged leftist".

Protests grew after Minnesota's Democratic Gov Tim Walz called it a "patriotic duty" to demonstrate for justice. "But it needs to be done safely," Walz said.

Wednesday's incident occurred during a protest against immigration enforcement in southern Minneapolis. Witness Brandon Hewitt told *MS NOW* that he heard three shots. "I got a bunch of video of them carrying the body to the ambulance," he said.

Another witness described a grisly scene to local station *FOX9*, saying "the surviving passenger got out of the car covered in blood." He said he saw a man who identified himself as a doctor try to reach Good but was denied access by officers.

The victim's mother, Donna Ganger, told the *Minnesota Star Tribune* that her daughter "was probably terrified." Good was "not part of anything like" challenging ICE officers, Ganger added.

Good was a mother and a poet who studied creative writing at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia, according to US media reports.

ICE federal agents have been at the forefront of the Trump administration's immigration deportation drive. A DHS recruitment campaign launched last summer aims to add 10,000 agents to the 6,000-strong force, sparking criticism that new officers are insufficiently trained.

US authorities said up to 2,000 officers were in Minneapolis for immigration sweeps. The shooting follows a similar incident in Chicago in September, where an officer shot dead an undocumented immigrant after authorities alleged the man tried to resist detention by driving his car into the official.—AFP

(CLOCKWISE from top left) Protestors clash with federal agents in St Paul, Minnesota; a portrait of the slain Renee Nicole Good is pasted to a light pole near the site of her shooting; and ICE agents gather near her vehicle after one of their colleagues shot and killed the 37-year-old mother and poet.—AFP / Reuters

US Senate advances bill to limit Trump on Venezuela

• Resolution moves forward on 52-47 vote; Trump blasts five senators who voted against him • President says America could tap oil reserves for years • Official asserts Washington won't let Caracas become 'client state of China'

WASHINGTON: The US Senate advanced a resolution on Thursday that would bar President Donald Trump from taking further military action against Venezuela without congressional authorisation, paving the way for further consideration in the 100-member chamber.

The vote on a procedural measure to advance the war powers resolution was 52 to 47, as five of Trump's fellow Republicans voted with every Democrat in favour of moving ahead. One Republican senator did not vote.

The vote took place days after US forces captured Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro in a dramatic military raid in Caracas on Saturday, and marked a shift in the 100-member chamber.

Trump's Republicans had blocked two previous attempts to advance similar resolutions in the Senate last year, as the administration ramped up military pressure on Venezuela with attacks on boats in the southern Caribbean and eastern Pacific.

However, the vote blocking the last resolution in November was only 51-49, just after top Trump advisors told lawmakers they did not plan to change the government or conduct strikes on Venezuelan territory.

After Maduro's capture, some lawmakers accused the administration of misleading Congress, including Democrats publicly and some Republicans behind the scenes.

Maduro's capture and Trump's rhetoric have also raised concerns that he might launch military action to capture Greenland, an Arctic island that is a territory of Denmark.

The five Republicans who voted on Thursday to move ahead were Paul, Susan Collins of Maine, Josh Hawley of Missouri, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Todd Young of Indiana. Trump's party holds a 53-47 majority in the Senate.

Meanwhile, President Donald Trump decried his fellow Republicans in the US Senate who voted to advanced a resolution that would bar him from taking further military action against Venezuela without congressional authorisation.

"Susan Collins, Lisa Murkowski, Rand Paul, Josh Hawley, and Todd Young should never be elected to office again," Trump wrote in a social media post.

'Tap oil for years'

The vote in Congress unfolds as Trump publicly details his long-term vision for US involvement in the South American nation.

In an interview with *The New York Times*, Trump said the US could run Venezuela and tap its vast oil reserves for "much longer" than a year. He underscored his policy with what he has termed the "Donroe Doctrine" of US dominance in the region.

"We obviously have maximum leverage over the interim authorities in Venezuela right now," said White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt, adding that their decisions "are going to continue to be dictated" by the US.

China's role

Amid these plans, US Energy Secretary Chris Wright said that while there is room for China to have a commercial role in Venezuela, however, Washington would ensure it remains the "dominant force".

"As long as America is the dominant force there, the rule of law, the United States controls oil flow. That will be fine," Wright told *Fox Business Network*. "Are we going to allow Venezuela to become a client state of China? Absolutely not."

Wright added he expects major US oil companies to soon expand their roles in the country.—Agencies

French leader accuses US of 'turning away' from allies

PARIS: Offering some of his strongest criticism yet of Washington's policies under President Donald Trump, French President Emmanuel Macron warned on Thursday the US was "gradually turning away" from some of its allies and "breaking free from international rules".

Macron delivered his annual speech to French ambassadors as European powers were scrambling to come up with a coordinated response to Washington's capture of Venezuela's leader Nicolas Maduro and the US president's designs on Greenland.

"The US is an established power, but one that is gradually turning away from some of its allies and breaking free from international rules that it was still promoting recently," Macron told ambassadors at the Elysee Palace.

"We are living in a world of great powers with a real temptation to divide up the world," he said, rejecting what he described as a "new colonialism and new imperialism".

While he criticised both China's "increasingly uninhibited commercial aggressiveness" and Russia as a "destabilising power" whose nearly four-year war in Ukraine has no end in sight, his remarks about the US stood out the most.

Macron, however, stopped short of calling for a break with Washington, after US envoys earlier this week took part in a key Paris summit to discuss security guarantees to uphold any potential ceasefire to end Russia's war against Ukraine.

He urged his diplomats not to be "spectators of things coming undone". "It's the opposite! We're not here to comment. We're here to act!" he said.

Macron did acknowledge that "multilateral institutions are functioning less and less effectively".

But the French leader said it was the right moment to "reinvest fully in the United Nations, as we note its largest shareholder no longer believes in it".—AFP

Iran accused of using 'live fire, tear gas' on protesters

• Crowds topple statues; exiled Shah's son calls for more protests, strikes • Pezeshkian warns suppliers against hoarding, price hikes

DUBAI: Security forces used tear gas and live fire to disperse protesters in Iran, rights groups said on Thursday, as people angered by a deepening economic crisis kept up their challenge to the authorities while exiled opposition groups urged new protests and strikes.

Twelve days of demonstrations have shaken the clerical authorities, who are already battling an economic crisis after years of sanctions and are recovering from a June war with Israel.

Authorities have blamed the unrest on "rioters," and the nation's judiciary chief has vowed there would be "no leniency" in bringing them to justice.

Reza Pahlavi, the son of the shah ousted by the 1979 Islamic revolution and a key exiled opposition figure, called the turnout on Wednesday "unprecedented" for this wave of demonstrations and urged major new protests on Thursday evening.

WOMEN look at the price of milk at a Tehran store.—AFP

"More than 10 days of protests have been met with unlawful force," said Amnesty International. "Iran's security forces have injured and killed both protesters and bystanders."

The *HRANA* monitor published a video of protesters in Kuhchenar, in the southern Fars province, cheering overnight as they pulled down a statue of Qassem Soleimani, the former commander of the Revolutionary Guards.

HRANA said that according to its count, protests had taken place in 348 locations across all of Iran's 31 provinces.

Separately, President Masoud Pezeshkian warned domestic suppliers against hoarding or overpricing goods, state media reported on Thursday, as Tehran attempts to implement high-stakes subsidy reforms amidst the unrest.

"People should not feel any shortage in terms of goods' supply and distribution," Pezeshkian said.—Agencies

Bangladesh, Pakistan set to resume direct flights after 14 years

PIA also set to restart direct Lahore-London flights from March 30

DHAKA: Bangladesh and Pakistan will resume direct flights after more than a decade, with Dhaka's national airline set to operate its first Dhaka-Karachi flight on January 29, while Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) will restart direct Lahore-London flights from March 30.

Biman Bangladesh Airlines will begin operations between Dhaka and Karachi. The resumption of the route, with two weekly flights, will be the first since 2012, significantly improving connectivity between the two South Asian nations.

"We are relaunching the Dhaka-Karachi route with two weekly flights," airline manager Bosra Islam told *AFP* on Thursday.

"The resumption of direct flights will significantly improve connectivity between Bangladesh and Pakistan, supporting business travel, tourism, and family reunions," Biman Bangladesh Airlines said in a statement.

Travellers between Bangladesh and Pakistan must currently use connecting flights through Gulf hubs such as Dubai and Doha.

Cargo ships had resumed sailing from Karachi to Bangladesh's key port of Chittagong in November 2024.

Relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh remained shaky during the rule of ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina. However, following the popular revolt against her government and her subsequent exile, relations between the two countries improved markedly.

Lahore-London flights restarted

Separately, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) announced on Thursday it will resume direct flights from Lahore to London on March 30, expanding its service to the United Kingdom. This follows the relaunch of Islamabad-London flights scheduled for March 29.

"After the resumption of flights to Manchester and the announcement of flights from Islamabad to London from March 29, the airline has also finalised arrangements for the launch of a direct flight from Lahore to London from March 30," a PIA spokesperson said in a statement.

The spokesperson added that PIA would operate up to seven flights to the UK by the end of March due to high demand. "All flights to the UK are operating on full loads," he said.

The airline plans to operate three weekly flights from Islamabad to London and one weekly flight from Lahore to London, with intentions to gradually increase the number of flights and add other UK destinations.

PIA's return to European skies comes after the European Union Air Safety Agency lifted a ban in Nov 2024 that had been in place since June 2020.

The ban was imposed over safety concerns following a crash in Karachi and a statement by Pakistan's then-aviation minister that pilots' licenses were "dubious."

The UK removed Pakistan from its Air Safety List in July 2025, allowing Pakistani airlines to apply for flight operations.

PIA received final approval to resume direct flights to the UK in September 2025, starting with routes to Manchester. Two months ago, the airline announced its return to London after a six-year hiatus.—Dawn Report

No keyboards or screens, just unparalleled computing power

Willow, housed at Google's quantum computing facility, is capable of solving within minutes complex problems that would take the best computer in the world 'more than trillions of years'

Monitoring Desk

THE cutting edge of the frontier of the world, of technology, of growth may sound like science fiction, but it is rapidly becoming economic fact.

Inside a Google facility in Santa Barbara, California lives Willow, the most powerful computer in the world. But this is no ordinary PC, it is a quantum computer.

In the words of *BBC* economics editor, Faisal Islam, "[i]t looks like a golden chandelier and contains the coldest place in the known universe", but contains "technology pivotal to financial security, Bitcoin, government secrets, the world economy and more".

Willow is an oil barrel-sized series of round discs connected by hundreds of black control wires descending into a bronze liquid helium bath refrigerator keeping the quantum microchip a thousandth of a degree above absolute zero.

There are no screens or keyboards. Each quantum computer is given a name such as Yakushima or Mendocino, they are each wrapped in a piece of contemporary art, and various graffiti-style murals adorn the walls.

According to Hartmut Neven, Google's Quantum AI chief, the Willow chip has settled "once and for all" the discussion about whether quantum computers can do tasks that classical computers can't.

Willow also solved a benchmark problem in minutes that would have taken the best computer in the world 10 septillion years — more than the age of the universe.

This theoretical result was recently applied to the Quantum Echoes algorithm, impossible for conventional computers, which helps learn the structure of molecules from the same technology used in MRI machines.

In Neven's words, this quantum chip can help with many problems facing humankind right now.

"It will enable us to discover medicines more efficiently," he told the *BBC*. "It will help us make food production more efficient, it will help us produce energy, to transport energy, to store energy... solve climate change & human hunger."

"It allows us to understand nature much better, and then unlock its secret to build technologies that make life more pleasant for all of us."

Some members of the team working on Willow have just received the Nobel prize for the original research into "superconducting qubits".

According to IBM, a quantum bit (or qubit) is the basic unit of information used to encode data in quantum computing, and can be best understood as the quantum equivalent of the 'bit', used by classical computers to encode information in binary.

In contrast to a traditional bit (either 0 or 1), a qubit is capable of existing in a superposition of both states (both 0 and 1) simultaneously, allowing for vastly more complex data representation.

ALPHABET CEO Sundar Pichai poses next to Willow, Google's quantum computer.—Courtesy Google Blog

The Willow chip has 105 qubits. Microsoft's quantum effort has 8 qubits, but uses a different approach. But the real race is to get to 1 million qubits for a "utility scale machine" that can do quantum chemistry, drug design, without error.

If you want to wrap your head around what it is capable of, imagine trying to find a tennis ball in one of a thousand closed drawers.

A classical computer opens each one in order. A quantum computer opens all of them at the same time.

Or similarly, instead of having to need a hundred keys to open a hundred doors in normal computing, quantum enables you to open all one hundred, with one key, instantly.

These machines will not be for everyone. They will not shrink down into phones or AI glasses or laptops.

But the point is that the power of these computers grows exponentially, and everyone is getting in on the act.

According to Sir Peter Knight, Chair of the UK's National Quantum Technology Programmes Strategy Advisory Board, Willow has broken new ground.

"All the machines are really still at the toy model stage, they make mistakes. They need error correction. Willow was the first to demonstrate that you could do error correction, through repeated rounds of repairs, which improve," he told the *BBC*.

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